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Diana T Fritz 03/20/2007 05:13:47 PM From DB/Inbox: Search Results

Cable Text:

SECRET

SIPDIS

TELEGRAM October 02, 2003

To: No Action Addressee

Action: Unknown

From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 4428 - UNKNOWN)

TAGS: PREL, PGOV

Captions: None

Subject: SCENESETTER FOR A/S BURNS' VISIT TO THE UAE, OCTOBER 5

Ref: None

S E C R E T ABU DHABI 04428

SIPDIS CXABU:

ACTION: POL

INFO: PAO ECON RSO AMB DAO USLO DCM P/M

Laser1:

INFO: PAO FCS

DISSEMINATION: POL

CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:MMWAHBA DRAFTED: POL:JFMAYBURY

CLEARED: ECON:OJOHN, CG:JDAVIS, USLO:RSIMM, DAO:BKERINS

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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1912

RUEHYN/AMEMBASSY SANAA IMMEDIATE 1215

INFO RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 3449

RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0138

RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP/DSCA-MEAN/ISA-NESA//

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 ABU DHABI 004428

SIPDIS

NOFORN

STATE FOR NEA/FO, NEA/ARP, AND INR/NESA

SANAA FOR NEA A/S BURNS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/01/13

TAGS: PREL PGOV AF IR IS IZ TC

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR A/S BURNS' VISIT TO

THE UAE, OCTOBER 5

Ref: A) Abu Dhabi 3940, B) Abu Dhabi 3178

11. (U) Classified by Ambassador Marcelle M. Wahba,

Reasons 1.5 (B) and (D).

- 12. (C) Summary: Assistant Secretary Burns: I look forward to welcoming you back to the UAE for your October 5 visit. Your Emirati interlocutors are eager to see you. We have requested meetings for you with MFA Minstate Hamdan Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (the de facto Foreign Minister), Armed Forces Chief of Staff LTG Muhammad Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (the de facto Defense Minister), and Dubai Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum. We had requested a meeting with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, however, we learned he will be out of town. In addition, we are proposing a brief interview for you with Abu Dhabi TV, time permitting. We will find out informally if President Zayed will be able to meet with you.
- 13. (S/NF) Summary continued: Your discussions with the Emirati leadership invariably will revolve around the major topics of the past year -- Iraq, Middle East peace talks, Afghanistan, and Iran. You will want to make a point of congratulating each of your interlocutors on the UAE's successful hosting of the IMF/World Bank Annual Meetings; while the meetings were held in Dubai, the event was very much a joint, UAE-wide affair, with the UAE military in particular extensively involved in providing security. There may be some lingering disappointment on the Emiratis' part over our decision to postpone the Strategic Partnership meetings, but you can reassure them of our commitment to this dialogue as soon as our calendars permit it. I suggested to Sheikh Hamdan (HBZ) that we hold the meetings in Washington around the time of his visit in late October, but he has declined. End Summary.
- $\underline{\mbox{$\P$}4.}$ (S/NF) We propose that you touch on the following key issues:
- -- Provide a readout of recent UN deliberations on Iraq resolution and the timetable for political transition, as well as a review of efforts to keep the Middle East peace talks on track;
- -- Be prepared to discuss the political and military situation in Iraq, with all three of your interlocutors;
- -- Thank the Emiratis for their tremendous humanitarian assistance throughout the Middle East, their public support and quiet lobbying for recognition of the Iraqi Governing Council, and their cooperation with our armed forces;
- -- Explain our role in keeping pressure on Iran to prevent it from developing a nuclear weapons capability;
- -- Reassure the Emiratis of our commitment to hold the Strategic Partnership and working sessions in the near future;
- -- Reaffirm our desire to finalize a bilateral ICC Article 98 agreement, a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement, and a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty;

Iraq: Unwavering support (\$100 million to date)

15. (S/NF) Iraq will be high on the Emiratis' agenda, and they will not mince words. They will laud us for toppling Saddam Hussein, yet criticize us for a de-Baathification that in their view runs too deep, and for dismissing the entire military and police force. They will urge us to work with moderate Sunnis in the political process, and warn us to remain vigilant

about Iran's intentions in Iraq and in the Gulf region.

16. (C) To their credit, the Emiratis strongly supported Iraqi delegations to the IMF/World Bank meetings in Dubai, and at the Arab League summit in Cairo. In mid-August, the Emirati leadership hosted six members of the GC - the first Gulf country to do so. Strong public statements of support for the GC and the Iraqi people followed the visit and after the formation of the new Iraqi Cabinet. The Emiratis were among the first in the Arab world to step up to the plate in providing much-needed humanitarian assistance and medical relief to the Iraqi people. The Sheikh Zayed hospital in Baghdad continues to receive over a thousand patients a day. The Emiratis have adopted six hospitals. By the end of the year, the UAE will have contributed between \$80 million to \$100 million of humanitarian aid to Iraq.

Middle East peace: Support for our engagement

17. (C) The Arab-Israeli conflict is the other highpriority agenda item for the Emiratis. The papers continue to feature graphic photos of the continuing violence. The Emiratis want us to stay engaged, but believe the recent U.S. veto of UNSC resolution and the Israeli cabinet decision to expel or kill Arafat has hurt USG interests and credibility in the region. HBZ believes Israelis should be more sensitive to the current situation in Iraq and help rather than hurt America's image and credibility. In his view, Arafat and Sharon seem to be helping each other achieve their own goals that are not in the interests of either nation. The Emiratis do not know Ahmed Qurei and are unsure of his ability to work independently of Arafat. The Emiratis were just as disappointed as we were with the loss of Abu Mazen, recognizing the importance of internal reform and a leadership independent of Arafat.

UAE largest Arab donor to Palestinians

18. (C) The UAEG has maintained a robust assistance package to the Palestinians. It has channeled nearly USD 78 million in project assistance to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since September 2000. In addition, the UAEG pledged USD 42 million at the 2003 Sharm-Al-Sheikh (USD 21 million) and 2002 Beirut (USD 21 million) Summits -- making the UAE the largest Arab donor to the Palestinians since the Intifada began three years ago (see Ref B). Please note that the UAE has paid its Beirut and Sharm-Al-Sheikh pledges in full. These efforts are carefully monitored and very much support our strategy to ensure that funds do not fall into the wrong hands. In addition to the government aid, private donations of ruling family members to the Palestinians certainly total tens of millions of dollars.

Iran: An uneasy co-existence

19. (C) The UAE and Iran have hit recently another strained period in their relationship after the slow improvement we witnessed over the past two years. The effort to reach some compromise on the Abu Musa island issue came to a near halt in late spring/early summer of this year. The Emiratis have made clear to us that they are deeply suspicious of Iran's territorial/military ambitions in the Gulf, particularly with respect to Tehran's nuclear and WMD acquisition policy. As you heard during your

meetings with Sheikh Muhammad Bin Zayed (MBZ) in Washington last July, the Emiratis are worried about Iranian designs in Iraq. The Emiratis believe that the Iranians are actively seeking a foothold in the Sunni Iraqi community as well as with the Shi'a. In their view, the Iranians are gaining ground within the Sunni community given their current sense of being left out of the new US-backed political process.

Afghanistan: UAE aid exceeds \$150 million

¶10. (C) The UAE continues to play a very helpful role in Afghanistan, particularly in the provision of humanitarian and reconstruction assistance. The UAEG also continues to provide substantial personal financial support to President Karzai. The UAE Armed Forces has deployed a 35-man Emirati Special Operations contingent to Bagram Air Base to work side-by-side with U.S. forces. UAE humanitarian and military programs in Afghanistan are ongoing, and we expect the final price tag to far exceed the \$150 million already spent (see Ref A).

Article 98, TIFA, and MLAT

111. (C) On Article 98, we are very close, but not quite there yet. Some differences continue to plague us on one or two minor issues. The UAEG owes us information on our latest text that we provided to them. There has been good progress on a TIFA. The UAE gave us back the text and their changes are being considered in Washington. We are aiming for a November TIFA agreement signing and council meeting in Washington with Minister of State for Financial and Industrial Affairs Mohammed Khalfan Bin Kharbash leading the UAE side. The MLAT text is with the UAE side and there is still work to be done. A team from DoJ (OPDAT and OIA) is expected here later this month to hold discussions on MLAT with the UAE.

Domestic considerations: Sheikh Zayed

112. (S) Since your last visit to the UAE, the domestic political situation has stayed about the same, with the exception of President Zayed, whose role in the day-to-day affairs of the state continues to diminish. Sheikh Zayed returned to Abu Dhabi in mid-September after spending the summer in Europe, where he underwent minor surgery for a hernia. Despite his age and his many health problems, he continues to see local and regional leaders, including President Mubarak on September 29. believe his wife, Sheikha Fatima, and his sons shield him from situations where he may be embarrassed by a failure of memory or loss of train of thought. note he mostly accepts calls with people he is familiar with and/or are more courtesy than substance. During his meeting with General Franks in June 2003, he did not address any substantive issues, but presented him with the UAE medal. His sons have taken over the substantive day-to-day operation of all the major portfolios of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and the Federal level ministries. That said, we continue to hear evidence that he is "consulted" on major issues that are likely to come to his attention or require his approval to gain support from other quarters.

UAE Mission: No longer a quiet post with 30% growth

113. (C) Our two governments continue to broaden and deepen bilateral ties in all domains, including military cooperation, law enforcement coordination, counter-terrorism training, trade and investment promotion, human rights monitoring, and educational and cultural programming. This expanded relationship has been accompanied by a 30 percent increase in mission staff over the last three years, and other federal agencies are looking to Abu Dhabi for their regional offices. When we move into our new Embassy next January, our space already will be at a premium. Time permitting, we will give you a brief windshield tour of the construction site.

Dubai Crown Prince

- 114. (C) You will want to open your meeting with Sheikh Muhammad Bin Rashid (MBR) by congratulating him on Dubai's successful hosting of the IMF/World Bank Annual Meetings two weeks ago. The UAE at the Federal level was heavily involved in the IMF/World Bank event, but Dubai and MBR clearly viewed it as their opportunity to showcase the uniqueness of Dubai as a regional hub for business, tourism, and travel. Both Secretary Snow and Fed Chairman Greenspan came away very impressed with what they saw here. You might also wish to express appreciation for the relatively large, high-ranking delegations that Dubai sent to represent the UAE at the US-Arab Economic Forum in Detroit (a women's delegation headed by Sheikha Lubna Al-Qassimi and a men's delegation headed by Sheikh Ahmad Bin Saeed Al-Maktoum).
- 115. (C) When the conversation turns to politics, you can expect to hear -- in addition to pleasure at the fact that Saddam is now out of the picture -- deep concern at our handling of the occupation in Iraq, in particular what MBR views as our ill-advised decision to dismiss Iraq's 500,000 man strong army. MBR is likely to argue that US soldiers and tanks should not be patrolling the streets of Iraqi cities but should rather be deployed to bases outside the cities; from there US commanders could work discreetly with local leaders and police to establish order inside the cities. MBR will likely tell you that the US needs to work harder to employ Iraqi workers and businesses in the reconstruction of Iraq (two of his favorite anecdotes in this regard are a bridge in Baghdad that the US allegedly paid a US company "millions" to reconstruct when there was an Iraqi company willing to do it for a fraction of that, and an alleged US decision to send a huge order for printing new Iraqi textbooks to a US company, leaving Iraq's normal textbook printing companies standing idle.)
- $\underline{\mbox{1}} \mbox{16.}$ (U) This cable was coordinated with AmConsul Dubai.
- 117. (U) MINIMIZE CONSIDERED WAHBA